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Party Leaders Say Reagan Will Have to Accept Deal on Nicaragua

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WASHINGTON, March 11 — While President Reagan was opposing all compromise with Congress on his request to aid the Nicaraguan rebels, leaders in both parties said today that the President would eventually have to accept a deal that falls far short of what he wants.

"There will be an accommodation," predicted Senator Alan K. Simpson of Wyoming, the Republican whip.

Senator Jim Sasser of Tennessee said there was a "strong consensus" among Senate Democrats that Mr. Reagan "had not done enough" to promote a negotiated settlement in the region. Any compromise that eventually emerges from Congress would probably bar release of any aid to the rebels until the Administration pursues negotiations more seriously, he added.

The President has asked Congress for \$100 million to aid the rebels, with \$70 million going for military aid and \$30 million for humanitarian assistance.

Reagan Acknowledges Polls

Today, President Reagan acknowledged that White House polls indicated that most Americans do not support his proposal, but said he rejected any compromise "to delay or reduce the aid we have requested."

Mr. Reagan told a group of regional reporters at the White House that proposals to limit the aid package would crush prospects for reform in Nicaragua, jeopardize democracy in Central America and pose a threat to the United States mainland.

"Those who would compromise must not compromise the freedom fighters' lives nor their immediate defensive needs," said Mr. Reagan, continuing his week-long lobbying campaign to win public and Congressional support. "They must not compromise Latin America's democracies or our own southern borders. They must not compromise freedom."

Evidence that the White House was seeking to broaden its lobbying campaign in Congress was underscored today when Gen. John R. Galvin, the commander of United States forces in Central America, told a House panel that granting the \$100 million request, would make a "profound difference" in the ability of the "contra" guerrillas to influence the military and political situation in Nicaragua.

'Could Be Too Little Too Late'

"In the last few days there has been talk here in Washington of compromise on this issue — smaller amounts of aid, delay in providing it, restrictions on the uses to which it could be put — all the usual temporizing and quibbles," said Mr. Reagan. "Well, let me set the record straight — the Soviets continue to fund the Nicaraguan Communists with massive infusions of arms, cash and so-called advisers. To delay or reduce the aid we've requested for the freedom fighters could be to send too little, too late."

On Monday, Mr. Reagan said that because of his lobbying efforts, the "tide is turning" in favor of his request on Capitol Hill.

But key law makers agreed today that the President was being overly optimistic. Thomas P. O'Neill, the Speaker of the House, said that according to his information, the President would lose by 20 to 25 votes in the House. Representative David E. Bonior of Michigan, one of the chief Democratic vote counters, said he had de-

tected no erosion in the ranks of the President's opponents.

The tally is likely to be closer in the Senate, where the Republicans hold a 53 to 47 edge. But Bob Dole, the majority leader, said it would be "very, very difficult" for the President to win a majority for his request as it now stands.

Comment From Durenberger

Senator Dave Durenberger, the Minnesota Republican who heads the Select Committee on Intelligence, said the Administration "had to do a better job of taking advice" from Congress on foreign policy matters. A majority of Congress, he added, has never favored military aid to the contras.

Some law makers said that Mr. Reagan's decision to send Philip C. Habib as a special representative to Central America was a "very important and very positive move," in the words of Representative John Breaux, a Louisiana Democrat who supports the President. "He's picked up some votes," Mr. Breaux said.

Senator Simpson suggested that the actions of the Sandinista leadership was providing "a lot of good fodder" for supporters of the rebels. And, nobody on Capitol Hill is underestimating Mr. Reagan's persuasive powers.

Compromise Is Foreseen

"The power of the presidency is awesome," said Speaker O'Neill. "It's hard to deny him."

But the widespread view at this mo-

ment on Capitol Hill is that the President will not be able to swing enough votes to win, and that no matter what he said today, he will eventually be forced to compromise.

As Senator Sasser indicated, one possible deal would allocate something less than \$70 million in military aid, and would not allow it to be spent until greater efforts were made to negotiate with the Sandinistas.

But it is not yet clear whether Congress would approve any military aid, no matter how it is restricted. Speaker O'Neill, an outspoken opponent of the Administration's policy, insisted today that "there is no compromise on this fight as far as I'm concerned."

Some Democratic law makers asserted today that the President was asking for a "blank check" in Nicaragua because his proposal would also abrogate a law that now bars the Central Intelligence Agency from using its contingency fund to aid the insurgents.

In addition, a group of House Democrats introduced a resolution that would require the Administration to tell Congress exactly how it spent the \$27 million appropriated last year to provide nonmilitary help for the contras. Government auditors testified recently that they could not account for at least \$7.1 million of those funds.